

Claims

1. A search and navigation system for a set of materials comprising:

a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials;

a plurality of values describing the materials, wherein each of the values has an

5 association with at least one of the attributes and each association defines an attribute-value pair;

a plurality of navigation states, wherein each navigation state corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of materials;

a set of rules; and

10 an interface for providing a representation of a navigation state, for modifying one or more rules from the set of rules, and for providing a representation of how modification of one or more rules affects the navigation state.

2. A search and navigation system for a set of materials comprising:

15 a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials;

a plurality of values describing the materials, wherein each of the values has an association with at least one of the attributes and each association defines an attribute-value pair;

a plurality of navigation states, wherein each navigation state corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of materials;

20 a rules engine; and

an interface for providing a representation of a navigation state and for applying information from a current navigation state to the rules engine to create one or more rules.

5 3. The search and navigation system of claim 2, wherein the interface further includes a representation of how one or more rules were processed in reaching a current navigation state.

 4. The search and navigation system of claim 2, wherein the interface further
10 includes a representation of one or more rules that were triggered and/or one or more actions that resulted from a triggering of one or more rules.

 5. A search and navigation system for a set of materials comprising:
a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials;
15 a plurality of values describing the materials, wherein each of the values has an association with at least one of the attributes and each association defines an attribute-value pair;
a plurality of navigation states, wherein each navigation state corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of materials;
20 an interface for displaying content including a representation of a current navigation state; and
a rules engine for specifying a set of rules for manipulating displayed content;

wherein, the interface further provides a representation of one or more rules associated with the current navigation state.

6. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the interface further
5 provides for modification of one or more rules associated with the current navigation state.

7. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the interface further
provides for an addition of one or more rules associated with the current navigation state.
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8. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the representation
of one or more rules includes a representation of which of the one or more rules are
activated.

15 9. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the interface further
provides for applying information from a current navigation state to the rules engine to
specify one or more rules.

10. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the displayed
20 content and the representation of one or more rules associated with the current navigation
state are combined.

11. The search and navigation system of claim 5, wherein the displayed content and the representation of one or more rules associated with the current navigation state are split.

5 12. A method for navigating a set of materials, a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials, a plurality of values describing the materials, wherein each of the values has an association with at least one of the attributes and each association defines an attribute-value pair, the method comprising:

displaying content including a current navigation state, wherein a navigation state
10 corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of materials; and

displaying, with the displayed content, one or more rules associated with the current navigation state for manipulating the displayed content.

15 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
revising the displayed rules; and
updating the displayed content in accordance with application of the revised rules.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein revising the displayed rules includes
20 modifying one or more of the displayed rules.

15. The method of claim 13, wherein revising the displayed rules includes adding one or more rules to the displayed rules.

16. The method of claim 12, further comprising creating one or more rules
5 using information from the current navigation state.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein creating one or more rules includes using a current navigation state to specify a trigger for activating a rule.

10 18. The method of claim 12, wherein creating one or more rules includes using a current navigation state to specify an action to be taken when one or more conditions for a rule are satisfied.

19. A computer program product, residing on a computer readable medium,
15 for navigating a set of materials, a plurality of attributes characterizing the materials, a plurality of values describing the materials, wherein each of the values has an association with at least one of the attributes and each association defines an attribute-value pair, the computer program product comprising instructions for causing a computer to:
display content including a current navigation state, wherein a navigation state
20 corresponds to a particular expression of attribute-value pairs and to a particular subset of materials; and

display, with the displayed content, one or more rules associated with the current navigation state for manipulating the displayed content.